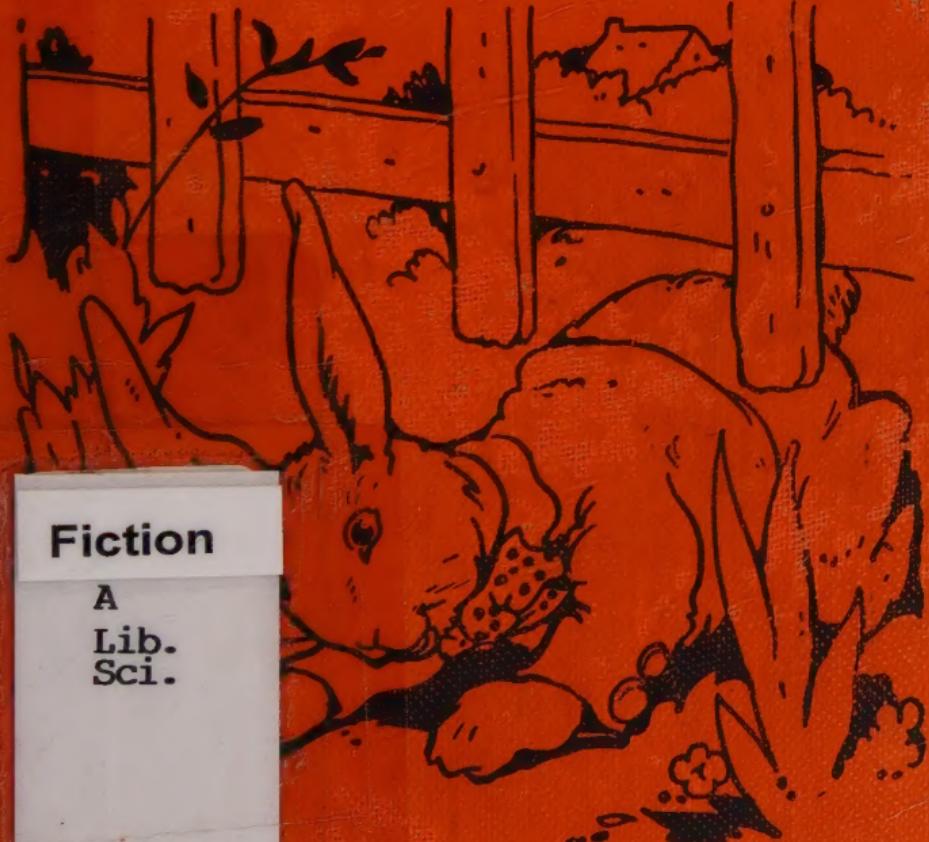


PETER RABBIT AND JACK THE JUMPER



LINDA STEVENS ALMOND

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Peter Rabbit
and
Jack-the-Jumper



WEE BOOKS FOR WEE FOLKS

"Peter Rabbit
and
Jack-the-Jumper "

By
LINDA STEVENS ALMOND

With Twenty-nine Illustrations

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Peter Rabbit and Jack-the-Jumper

ALL good little boys and girls know that Peter Rabbit lived with his Mother and his little sisters, Flopsy, and Mopsy, and Cotton-tail, away down under the roots of a fir tree that stood at the edge of a big wood.

It was the cosiest little house you ever saw. There was a lovely yard in front, and there was a sand-

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pile, and a swing, and a see-saw, and a cunning little tent in the yard. Sometimes Peter would put on his soldier clothes and, with a tiny gun on his shoulder, he would march about crying, "Right, left; right, left," and Flopsy, and Mopsy, and Cotton-tail would march along behind. They had no end of fun playing soldiers.

But Peter was never satisfied with doing one thing for any length of time. Often, right in the middle of a nice game, he would run off and sometimes stay away from home for so long a time that his little sisters feared they would never, never see him again.



One summer morning, after the breakfast dishes had been washed and the house set in order, Old Mother Rabbit called her children to her side and said:

“Now, my dears, I am going to call on Mrs. Bunnie Bunniekin, so I want all of you to stay in the yard like good little rabbits until I return.”

Flopsy promised to stay in the yard, and so did Mopsy, and so did Cotton-tail, but Peter, who was always full of mischief, began turning handsprings and pretended that he did not hear.

Then Old Mother Rabbit put on her bonnet and took her reticule,



and her red sunshade, and away she went over the hill on her way to Mrs. Bunnie Bunniekin's house.

For a while Peter was as good a little rabbit as anyone would wish to see, and he and his little sisters had a jolly time playing Tag, and Hop-Scotch, and Old Witch. It wasn't long before who should come leaping along through the wood but Jack-the-Jumper. He was much excited, and was all out of breath when he reached the fir tree.

"Oh, Peter," he panted, "what do you think? Mr. McGregor and everybody else up at his house has gone away to spend the day. Let's go up to his cabbage patch."



"Indeed Peter shall not leave the yard, Jack-the-Jumper," said Flopsy.

"Oh, Peter, please do not go to Mr. McGregor's cabbage patch," begged Cotton-tail. "You know that Father Rabbit was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor."

"Pooh! No one can catch us," retorted Peter. "We can run as fast as the wind, and besides I can't always stay at home with girls." And straightway he grabbed up his little cap and darted away before his sisters could say another word.

"Girls talk too much anyway," said Jack-the-Jumper.



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“So they do,” agreed Peter.

Lippity lip, lippity lip, went Peter and Jack-the-Jumper down the road, and up hill and down dale. Sometimes Jack-the-Jumper would race ahead and hide behind a tree until Peter came along, and then he would jump out at Peter and cry, “Boo!” And then Peter would squeal and pretend he was scared nearly out of his wits. But of course he wasn’t, for he knew all along that it was Jack-the-Jumper.

As they went through the wood they saw Little Squirrelie Squirreliekin scooting up a tree.

“Come on down, Little Squirrelie Squirreliekin, and go with us. We



are on our way to Mr. McGregor's cabbage patch," invited Jack-the-Jumper.

"No, thank you," replied Little Squirrelie Squirreliekin. "I am very busy looking for a nice store-room for my nuts."

"He can't run as fast as we can anyway," whispered Peter to Jack-the-Jumper.

But Little Squirrelie Squirreliekin heard what Peter had whispered to Jack-the-Jumper, and said: "Maybe I can't run as fast as you can, but you can't climb trees."

Peter and Jack-the-Jumper had nothing to say to that, so they scampered off and soon after came



to Mr. McGregor's cabbage patch. What a lovely cabbage patch it was! They hopped about, nibbling the tender little leaves here and there, and were having a perfectly splendid time and feeling thankful that nobody at Mr. McGregor's house was at home that day. But all of a sudden a loud voice called out:

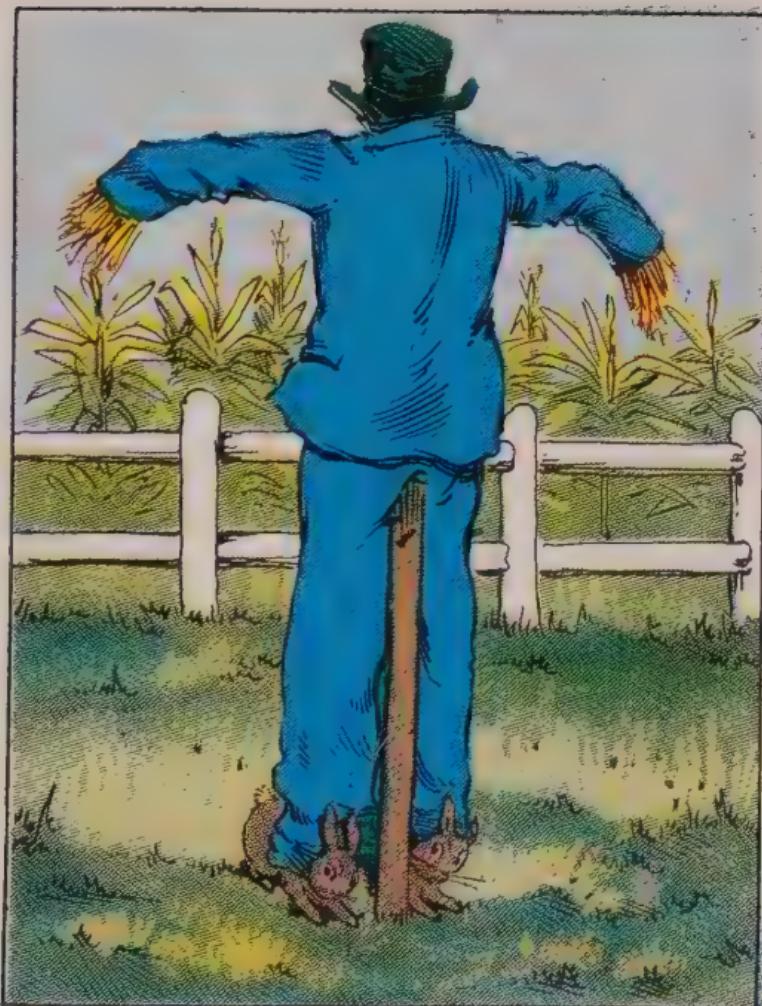
“Stop, thieves! Stop eating my cabbages!”

Gracious! Peter and Jack-the-Jumper were so frightened that their little hearts nearly stopped beating, and they took to their heels and ran for dear life. Suddenly they spied a scarecrow at the end of Mr. McGregor's garden which had



been set up¹ there to keep the black-birds from the corn. Peter ran right under one of the legs of the scarecrow, and Jack-the-Jumper ran under the other, and there they hid, trembling from head to foot, and expecting to be caught at any moment. Jack-the-Jumper thought of his happy home in the broomstraw field and wished that he had never run away, and Peter thought of his happy home under the fir tree and wished with all his heart that he had stayed at home and played with his little sisters.

After they had hidden under the scarecrow's legs for ever and ever so long, they began to feel stiff

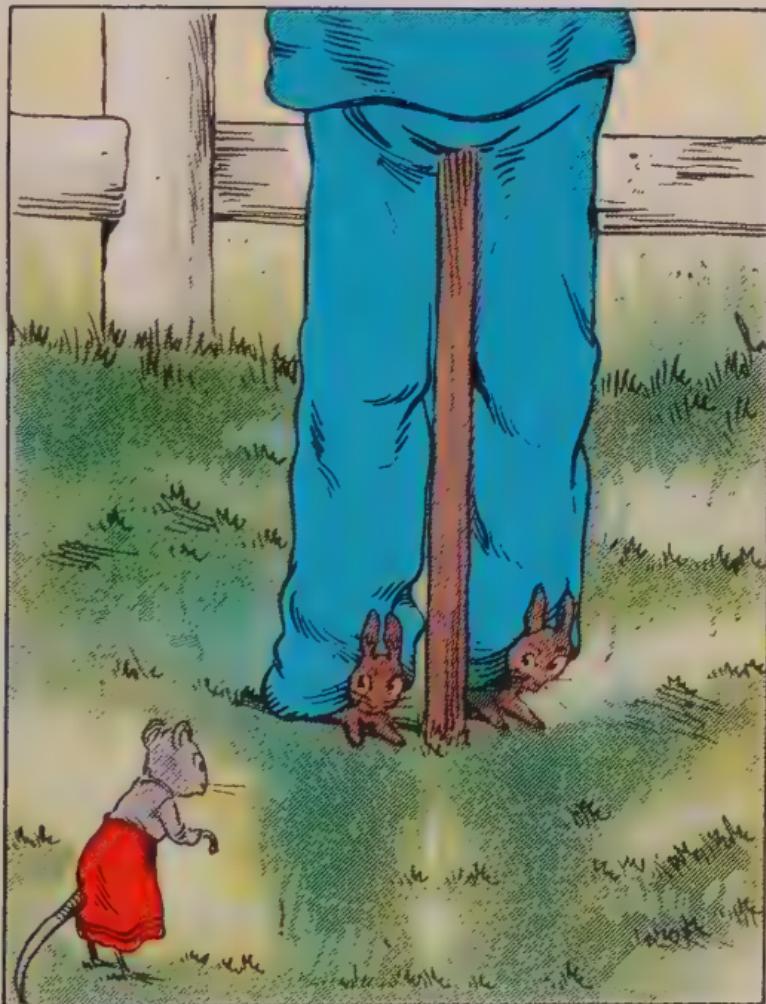


and tired from being in such an uncomfortable place, and started to quarrel and to blame each other for the trouble they had gotten into.

“My! My!” said a little voice close by. “It isn’t nice to quarrel.”

Peter and Jack-the-Jumper peeped out just the tiniest bit, when whom did they see sitting close by but Little Fannie Field-Mouse. And when they told her of their predicament she felt very sorry indeed for them, and she said:

“I tell you what I will do, little rabbits. I will run up to Mr. McGregor’s garden and find out if the folks have come home. Then I will come back and tell you if it’s

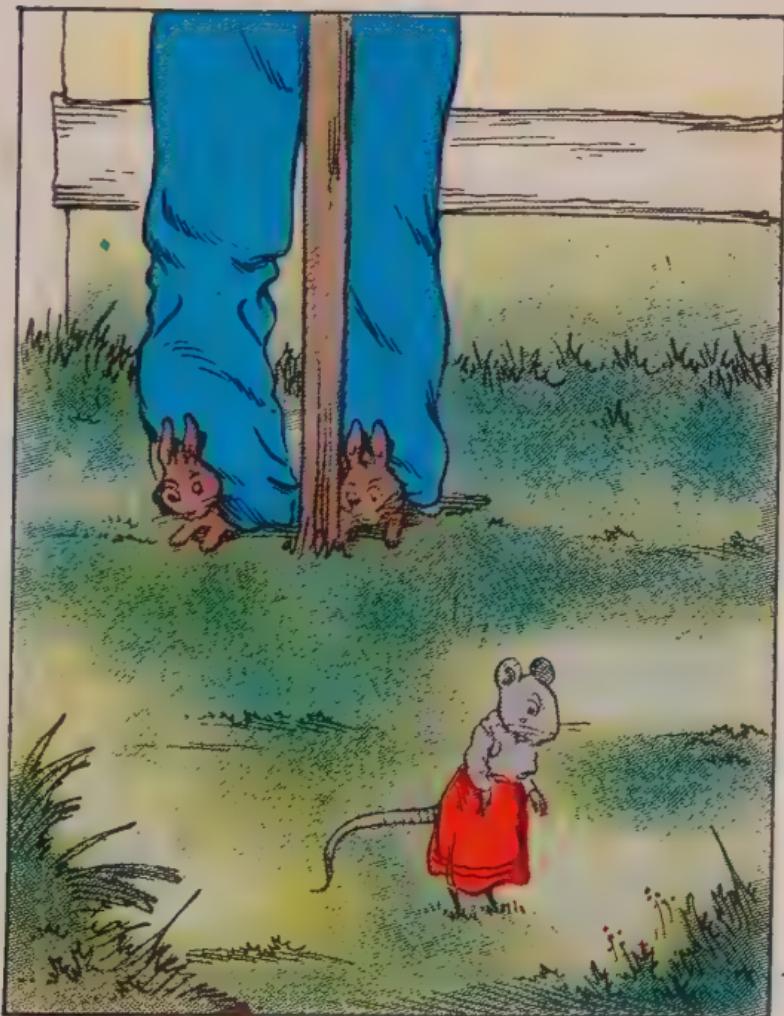


safe for you to leave your hiding place."

Just as Little Fannie Field-Mouse started away the loud voice again called out:

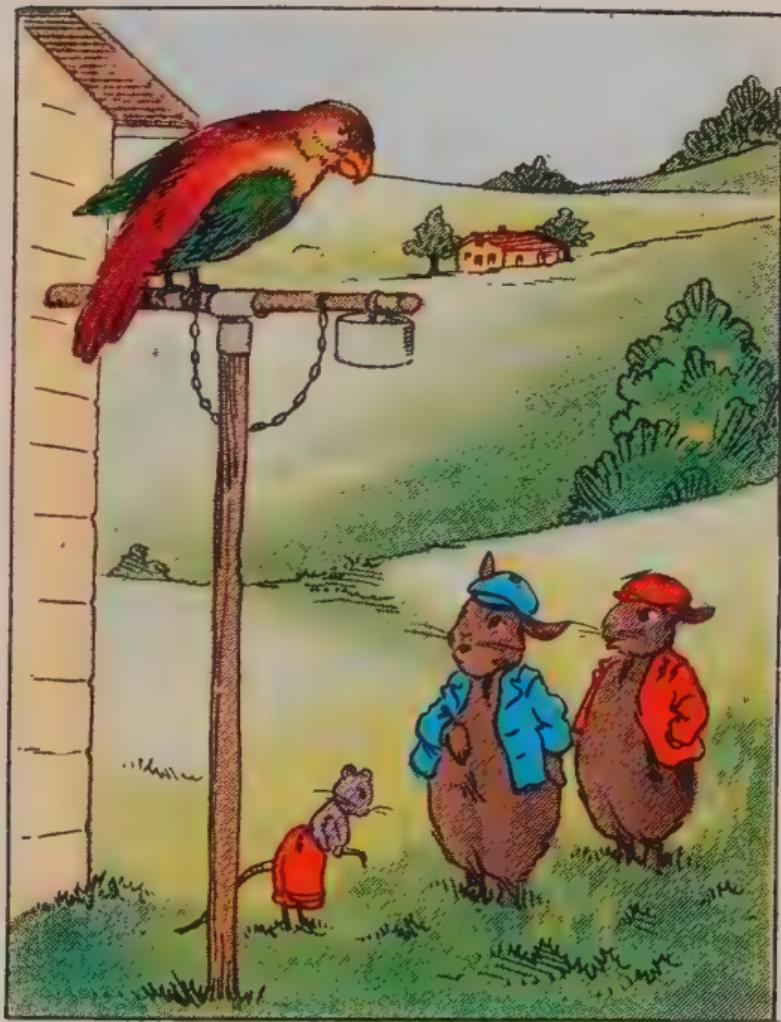
"Thieves! I know where you are hiding!" And poor Peter and Jack-the-Jumper crouched still more closely under the legs of the scarecrow and began to think that their time had now surely come.

In a little while Little Fannie Field-Mouse came back, and what do you suppose she told Peter and Jack-the-Jumper? Why, just this: that the loud voice was none other than that of Pretty Polly, Mr. McGregor's parrot. Of course Peter



and Jack-the-Jumper were very grateful to Little Fannie Field-Mouse, for there is no telling how long they might have had to stay under the scarecrow's legs if she had not happened to come along that way, but all the same they were very angry to think that a joke had been played on them. So they ran through the garden towards Mr. McGregor's house and, when they saw Pretty Polly sitting on her perch, they told her how very unkind they thought she had been.

And Pretty Polly said: "Ha! Ha! Good joke! Don't be cross with Pretty Polly!"



Peter and Jack-the-Jumper could not help but laugh at that, so after making friends with Pretty Polly and hearing her tell about other pranks she had played, they said goodbye and ran around by the barn where they saw Teedy and Deedy and Dot, Mrs. Tabby Cat's children.

They were gathering catnip to make catnip tea for their Mother who was sick. Peter told them that there was better catnip to be found over by the beehives, but Teedy and Deedy and Dot said they would not venture near the beehives for fear the bees might sting them. Peter said he wasn't



afraid of bees and over to the hives he went.

“Bzzzzzzzzzz,” warned Mr. Buzzie Bee, but Peter paid no attention, and just as he was about to pluck a nice green sprig of catnip, “Bzzzzzzzzzz,” said Mr. Buzzie Bee again, and poor Peter was stung so badly over his eye that he jumped up and down and yelled at the top of his voice. Jack-the-Jumper had to laugh at Peter’s antics, but Teedy and Deedy and Dot felt very sorry for him, and they hunted about until they found a plantain leaf, and then Teedy took out her little hanky and bound it around Peter’s swollen face.



It certainly wasn't any fun getting stung by a bee, but, as they ran along, Peter forgot all about it. Soon they came to Clover Brook, and there they saw Billy Bull Frog sitting on the bank with his music book practicing a solo which he was to sing that night at the Frog Musicale. When he had finished, Peter and Jack-the-Jumper clapped their hands and said they had never heard better singing, and Billy Bull Frog was quite puffed up at the compliment.

Then Peter wanted to cross the brook to taste the clover buds on the opposite side, but Billy Bull Frog said the stones in the brook



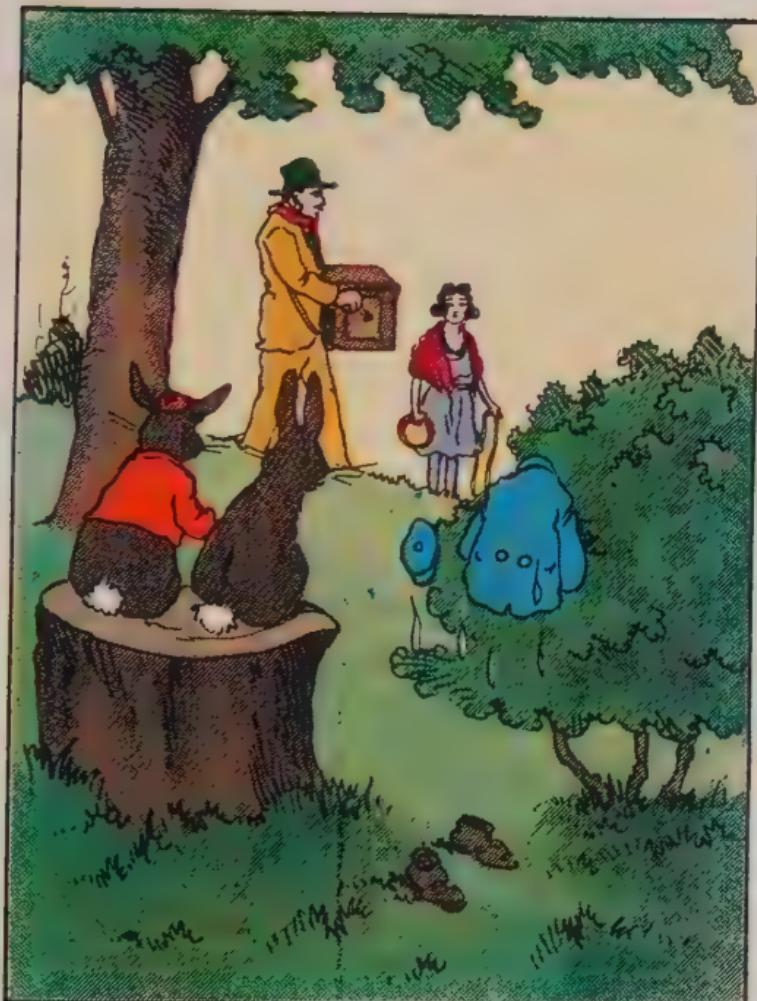
were very slippery, and that Peter might slip and tumble into the water. Peter said he would cross the brook in spite of the slippery stones, and he got along very well at first, but, just as he reached the middle of the brook, his foot slipped and SPLASH! he went head over heels right into the water.

Jack-the-Jumper doubled up with laughter to see poor Peter's little hind legs kicking up in the air, but Billy Bull Frog felt so very sorry for Peter that he took off his pretty green coat and, after placing it beside his music book, he plunged into the brook and helped Peter back to shore.



Before leaving Billy Bull Frog Peter declared that thereafter he would certainly never again fail to take good advice. When Peter and Jack-the-Jumper reached the big road Peter hung his little clothes on a bush, and while they were sitting on a stump waiting for them to dry they saw a man with a hurdy-gurdy coming towards them. And walking beside the hurdy-gurdy man was a pretty little girl with rosy cheeks and black curls, and she carried a little tambourine in her hand.

The hurdy-gurdy man and the pretty little girl stopped, and the hurdy-gurdy man said, “Would you



like to hear a pretty tune, little rabbits?"

"Oh, my, yes, indeed, if you please," cried Peter and Jack-the-Jumper very politely.

Then the music began, and the hurdy-gurdy man asked the pretty little girl to dance, and she smiled and nodded, and, with her little tambourine in her hand, she skipped out into the middle of the road. And how prettily she did dance! Peter whispered to Jack-the-Jumper that he was sure she was a fairy, and Jack-the-Jumper whispered back that he thought so too. But of course she was not, for she was the hurdy-gurdy man's little girl.



When finally she stopped dancing Peter told the pretty little girl that as soon as his clothes were dry he would dance a jig. How the hurdy-gurdy man and the pretty little girl laughed at the idea of a rabbit dancing a jig! But Peter said indeed he could dance, and so could Jack-the-Jumper. Then the hurdy-gurdy man said he would fix Peter all right, so he took the little girl's red shawl and wrapped it around him and gave him the tambourine. Then he stuck a feather in Jack-the-Jumper's cap, and when the music started Peter and Jack-the-Jumper began to dance, and they danced and



they danced until they were both out of breath.

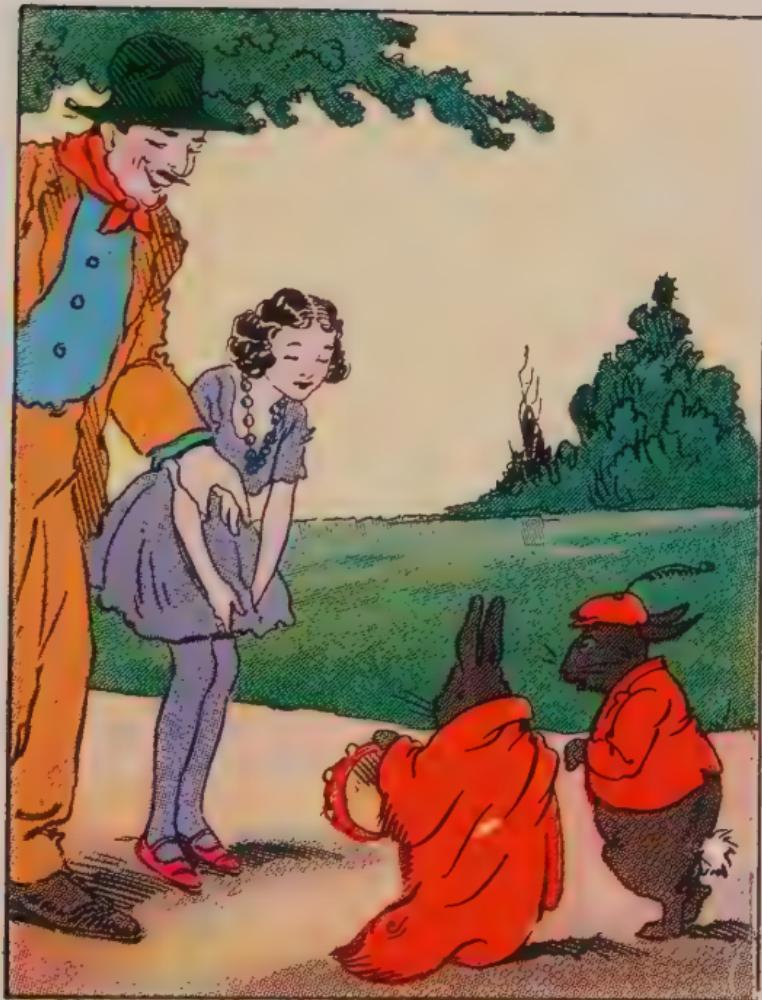
The pretty little girl clapped her hands and said she had never seen such smart little rabbits.

“Why, that isn’t anything,” said Peter, tossing his head. “You should see my little sisters dance!”

“You don’t say so!” said the pretty little girl. “How many sisters have you?”

“Three,” answered Peter. “There’s Flopsy, and there’s Mopsy, and there’s Cotton-tail. And I’ve got a Mother too.”

Then the pretty little girl whispered something to the hurdy-gurdy man, and he nodded his head, and



she looked ever so pleased, and said to Peter:

“Well, if your sisters dance so well it would be very nice for them to have a tambourine, so I am going to give them mine.”

“Oh, goody, goody!” cried Peter, jumping up and down. “If you don’t mind I will give the tambourine to Cotton-tail.”

The pretty little girl thought a moment.

“It might make your other sisters feel slighted not to have something sent to them too, so I will send Flopsy my skipping rope, and Mopsy shall have my pretty string of blue beads.”



Peter was so tickled that he could hardly believe his eyes, and then the hurdy-gurdy man, not to be outdone by the pretty little girl, gave Peter a lovely bunch of flowers to be presented to Old Mother Rabbit with his compliments.

Then the hurdy-gurdy man and the pretty little girl said they must be going, and Peter and Jack-the-Jumper thanked them for their kindness, and watched them as they went down the road merrily singing, "Aha, and aho, and away we go!"

By this time Peter's clothes were dry, so he put them on, and they started off for home. As it was



getting late they began to run very fast so they might reach home before dark. But after a bit Peter's legs began to get tired, and he felt sore all over from his tumble into the water, and it was rather hard for him to keep up with Jack-the-Jumper, though of course he did not want to say so, so he said: "Let's not run so fast. My head hurts where the bee stung me."

"Huh!" cried Jack-the-Jumper over his shoulder. "The bee didn't sting your legs, Peter. Hurry up."

But, alas! Peter couldn't hurry any faster, and then he began to sneeze, and sneeze, and sneeze, and every time he sneezed Jack-the-

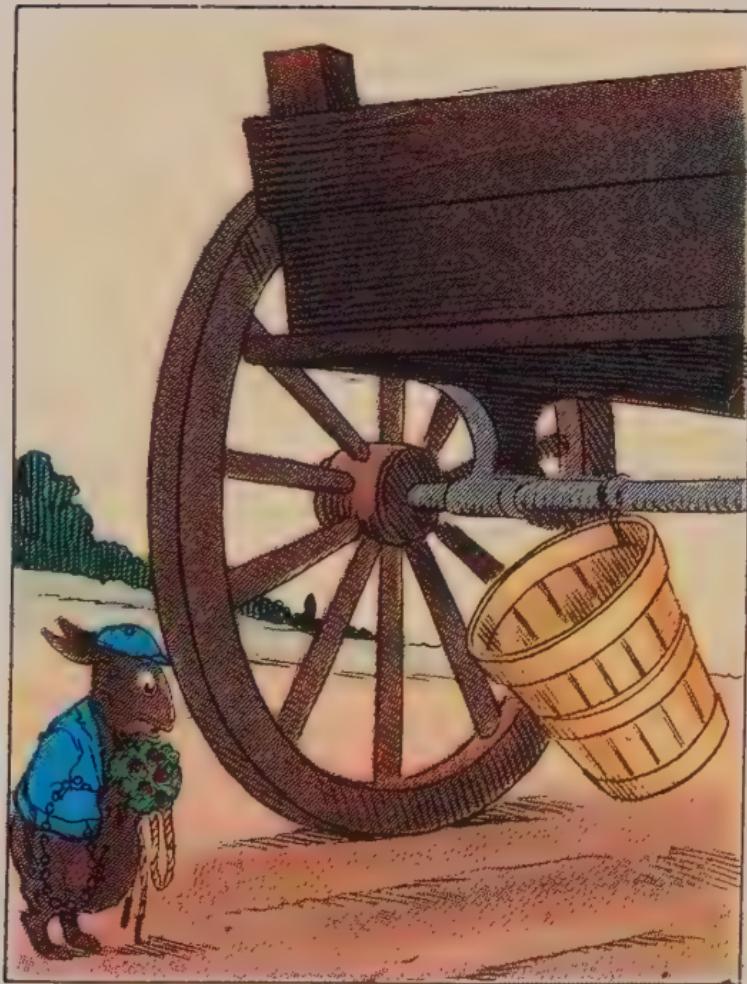


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Jumper got farther and farther ahead, until at last he was entirely out of sight.

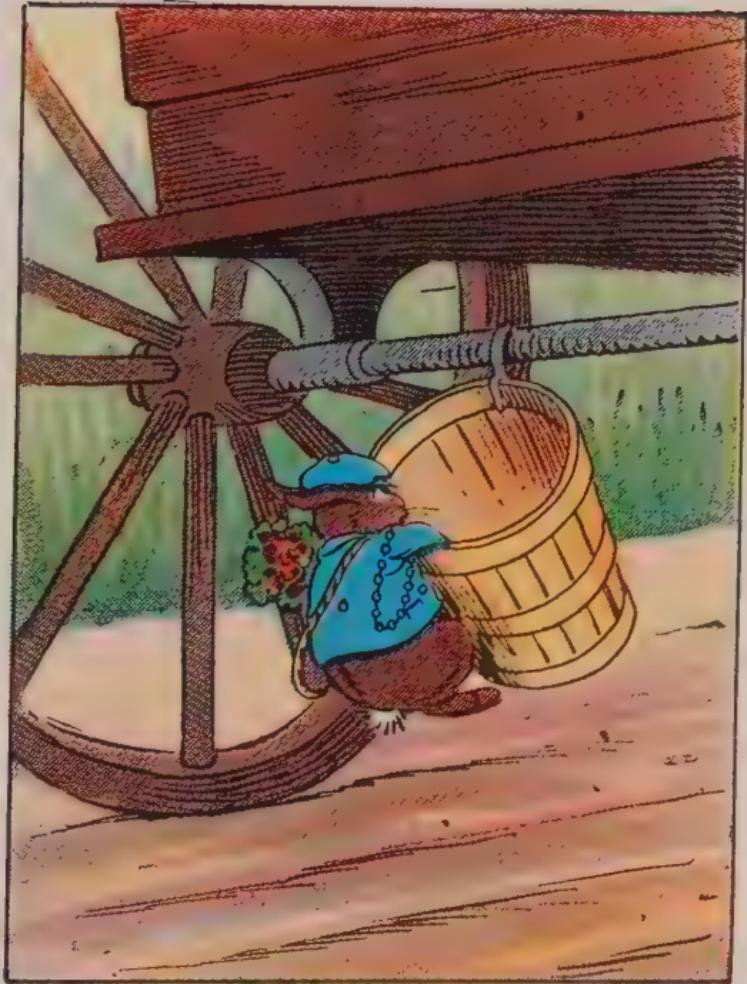
"Oh, dear," wailed Peter, "it won't be long before it will be getting dark and I might lose my way!"

And just when Peter felt that he couldn't take another step and his little heart was beginning to beat very fast, around the bend in the road came a horse and wagon, and under the wagon, hanging to the axle, was a bushel basket. A nice old man sat on the wagon seat, and all of a sudden the nice old man said, "Whoa, Nellie!" And Nellie stopped, for the nice old man wanted Nellie to rest for a



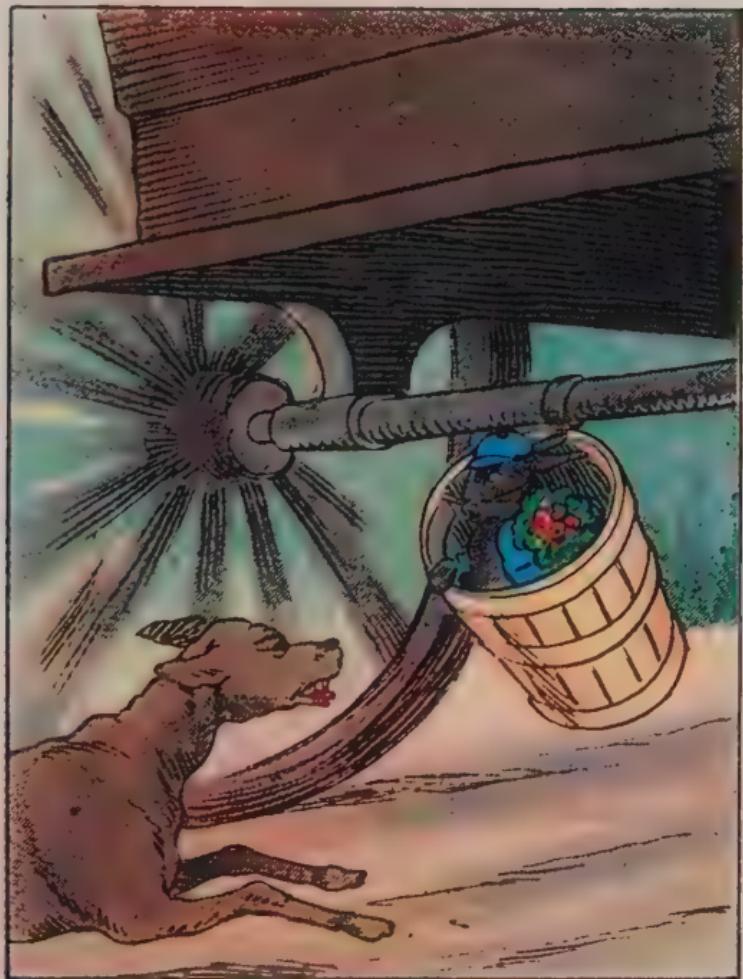
little while. Now, as you all know, Peter was a smart little rabbit, and quick as a flash he hopped into the basket which was hanging under the wagon.

After Nellie had rested, the nice old man said, "Gee-up, Nellie," and Nellie went jogging down the road. Peter was feeling much better now, for he had found a nice juicy carrot at the bottom of the basket which he nibbled with great relish, and it was no end of fun to be riding instead of walking. He stood up and peeped out of the basket and saw so many wonderful sights along the road that his eyes grew as big as saucers. In



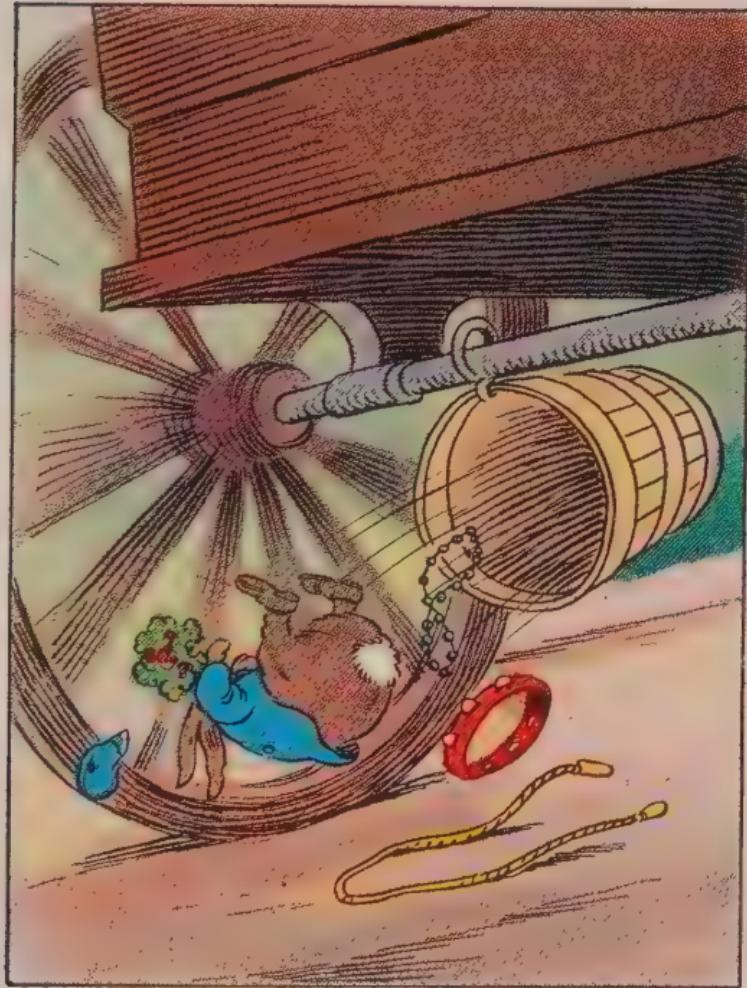
the fields he saw lots of woolly lambs, and red cows, and flocks of geese, and a turkey gobbler that was sitting on a fence and making an awful lot of noise, and he thought he had never had so much fun in all his life. And he also thought how foolish it was for Jack-the-Jumper to be always in a hurry.

But, all of a sudden, as they were passing a house, a great big dog ran out and barked in such a ferocious manner that Peter crouched deep down in the basket expecting at any moment that the dog would jump in on top of him. And just when the dog was close to the basket the nice old man said, "Gee-



up, Nellie.” And Nellie started off at such a brisk trot that before long the dog was left far behind. Nellie kept going faster and faster, and the basket began to swing higher and higher. Peter held on for dear life, but all at once the basket went upside down, and Peter was dumped out into the middle of the road.

But when Peter jumped up and looked about, he was much surprised to see that he was very near home, and he was so happy that he didn’t know what to do. So he shouted, “Oo-hoo!” And the nice old man cried, “Whoa, Nellie!” and when he saw that a

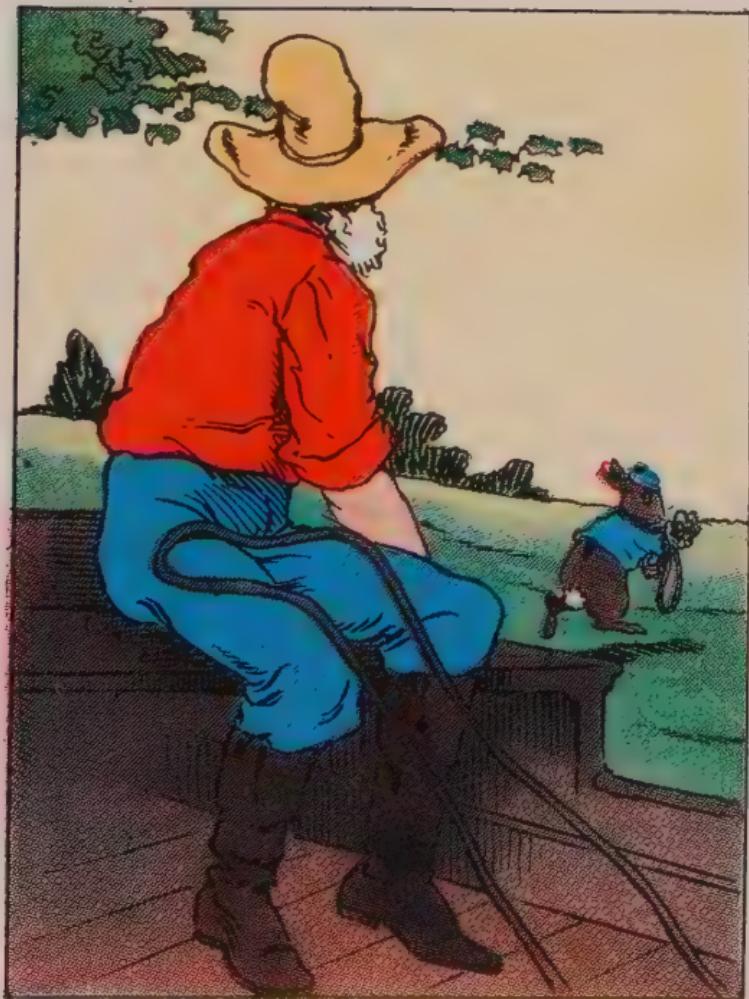


little rabbit was calling him he just laughed, and laughed, and laughed.

After the nice old man stopped laughing Peter explained how he had ridden in the basket under the wagon, and apologized for doing so without permission. The nice old man said he did not mind at all, and that the next time he came that way he would stop and take Peter to town to see the sights.

Then Peter said goodbye to the nice old man, and scampered over the hill and down to the fir tree.

Now Old Mother Rabbit was at the door looking for Peter, and she was very cross indeed, but when he told her all about the



scarecrow, and Pretty Polly, and how he was stung by Mr. Buzzie Bee, and his tumble in the brook, and about the hurdy-gurdy man and the pretty little girl, and his ride home in the basket, and showed her the lovely presents, she was so much pleased that she did not have the heart to punish him.

Flopsy jumped up and down when she saw the skipping rope, and Mopsy said she had never seen such a pretty string of beads, and Cotton-tail was so happy over the little tambourine that she began to dance all about the room, and Old Mother Rabbit was perfectly



delighted with the nice bunch of flowers.

And Peter was so glad to be at home, all safe and sound, with his Mother and his little sisters, that he promised them that he would never, never, never run away again.





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